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| 25X1 | <div></div>           | 12 Oct 62   | 32          | COMOR-D-63, subj: Coverage of North Korea |

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| 25X1 | <div></div>           | 12 Dec 62   | 34          | COMOR-D-64, subj: Possible Deployment of Soviet MRBMs and IRBMs Outside the Eurasian-Soviet Bloc |

12 October 1962

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COMOR-D-63

MEMORANDUM FOR: Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

SUBJECT: Coverage of North Korea

The attached paper was referred to the Working Group and is sent to you for your reference and information.

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Acting Chairman  
Committee on Overhead Reconnaissance

Attachment:  
Subject Paper

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Coverage of North Korea

1. You will recall the difficulty under which we labored in interpreting recent photography of the Taiwan Straits area because of the long time that had elapsed since our previous photography. Our base lines were too old to be useful and we were unable to determine whether or not certain of the facilities photographed represented new construction and were indicative of a recent buildup. This experience highlighted for us the importance of getting periodic coverage of certain critical areas including those which might be temporarily quiescent. North Korea is another example of a critical area in which Soviet Bloc and Western forces are directly opposed. It is, therefore, one of the places in which drastic action might occur during a period of heightened tension.

2. In spite of the potentially explosive nature of North Korea, there has been no real photographic coverage for almost ten years. We have some recent KH coverage of North Korea and some peripheral photography. These holdings, however, are limited and do not represent the complete and up-to-date coverage that we should have.

Recent deliveries of Soviet jet bombers and new radars, such as TALL KING and SPOON REST, which the Communist Chinese do not have, underscore the Soviet Bloc's continuing interest in preserving a capability for mischief in the area. We lack, however, the necessary information on the numbers and locations of such equipment and there are serious gaps in our knowledge of military installations such as airfields. We have no evidence to connect the SPOON REST to a potential surface-to-air missile capability and no knowledge that short range surface-to-surface missiles may be deployed in North Korea. However, it is our belief that only overhead photography will give us this information. In view of the current buildup of tension over Berlin and Cuba, it would be highly desirable to provide ourselves with a good up-to-date base line of photography covering North Korea in order to be able to assess changes in order-of-battle, to serve as a basis for estimating the general state of forces in the area, and to provide the military with detailed information for contingency planning.

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3. I feel strongly that we should take the earliest practical opportunity to cover North Korea with good quality U-2 photography. On the other hand, in view of the recent loss of a U-2 and the threat to the U-2 from surface-to-air missiles, I believe that it would be unwise for us to schedule a mission over North Korea in the present world situation without having a reasonably clear idea about the existence or non-existence of surface-to-air missiles in the area. We could probably determine whether such missiles are present and the nature of their deployment from good TKH cover. I recommend, therefore, that we proceed to get full coverage of North Korea on the first CORONA mission that can be programmed for this purpose. (I assume that we will have achieved coverage of Kamchatka by the time that this can be done. In the event that this has not been accomplished, however, I recommend that Kamchatka remain the prime objective until the advent of winter weather and high latitude darkness.) Once we have obtained CORONA coverage of North Korea we will then be in a position to:

- a. determine how many of the required answers can be obtained from it;
- b. the importance of getting more detailed coverage; and,
- c. the location of any surface-to-air missile sites and other elements of the North Korean air defense net to permit sound planning for any subsequent U-2 flights in the area.

Once these steps have been accomplished, I believe that we should make a new assessment of the situation to see whether we should make a recommendation for U-2 coverage at that time.

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